

The Perfect Salad

Every bunny has his own definition of the perfect salad. There is no single vegetable that every rabbit will eat and every rabbit I've met has some foods he refuses to touch. You and your rabbit will define the perfect salad for him based on his personal tastes, availability of produce in your area, and your budget.

Elements of the Perfect Salad

Many experts consider **fresh vegetables** to be an important part of a healthy diet. Suggested amounts vary from one to three cups per day per five pounds of rabbit. If your rabbit hasn't had vegetables before, start slowly. Introduce new items one at a time and watch your rabbit for two to three days for any sign of GI upset (loss of appetite, loose stools, gas, etc.). If you notice a problem, immediately discontinue the new food and allow your rabbit's system to return to normal before introducing another new food item.

If your rabbit does not eat commercial rabbit food, it is important to feed a **variety** of vegetables — **at least** three or four different vegetables from the list below — to ensure proper nutrition. For rabbits who do eat commercial rabbit food, less variety may be better.

Greens

- Beet Tops
- Collard (use with caution, may cause bladder sludge)
- Dandelion (no pesticides)
- Mustard

Fragrant Herbs

- Basil
- Cilantro
- Mint
- Parsley (curly or flat leaf)
- Peppermint leaves

Leaf Lettuces

- Endive
- Escarole
- Green Leaf
- Red Leaf
- Romaine

Note: Never feed Iceberg Lettuce. It has no nutritional value and may cause diarrhea.

Cabbage Family

- Broccoli

- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Kale (all types)

Note: Limit quantities because they can cause gas.

Roots and Tops

- Carrots (limit quantities because of high natural sugar content)
- Radish

Miscellaneous

- Alfalfa sprouts
- Bok choy
- Celery (cut in small lengths)
- Green peppers
- Radicchio (expensive in some areas)
- Raspberry leaves
- Spinach
- Watercress
- Wheat grass

Never feed your rabbit corn or potatoes.

Preparation

In the ideal home salads are freshly prepared twice a day just before they are served. In reality, few of us have the time to do it this way. The most important part of salad preparation is selecting the right ingredients and carefully washing every produce item before serving.

I know several people who wash all produce as soon as they get home from the grocery store. They may go on to assemble salads at that time, tossing everything together. Some then store everything in a large bag — or a clean pillowcase — and serve individually from there. Others store the salad in serving-size bags. This “one big salad” approach works well if you only have one rabbit — or if you are lucky enough to have all your rabbits agree on what is edible.

My family of ten has six different definitions of the perfect salad. I spend an hour every other day assembling salads for the next two days. I wash produce at that time and assemble in the grocery store produce bags that were emptied by the last salad assembly process. I store the assembled salads in the same arrangement on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, so I can easily tell whose is whose even when I’m half asleep.